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National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

# NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News

October 2002

## Survey Says! Give Us Your Feedback on HIPDB

If you represent a registered entity that is eligible to query the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB), you are invited to participate in a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is intended to assess customer satisfaction with the HIPDB in terms of its operational effectiveness, as well as the quality and usefulness of the information it contains. We are also soliciting your comments and suggestions to help improve the HIPDB.

The HIPDB survey is being conducted in conjunction with the American Customer Satisfaction Index Initiative, which will measure customer satisfaction with the HIPDB relative to other government and private sector programs. If you are a registered HIPDB user, you can take the survey on-line through the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS), available at <http://www.npdb-hipdb.com>. 

## Introducing the Report Response Service

In December 2002, the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the HIPDB will introduce the on-line Report Response Service for subjects of reports. The Report Response Service allows subjects to maintain current address information with the Data Banks; add, modify, or remove Subject Statements; initiate or withdraw disputes; or elevate or withdraw requests for Secretarial Review on-line. By eliminating the need for a subject to complete and mail paper responses, this on-line service simplifies the way a subject communicates with the Data Banks.

Beginning in December, each *Notification of a Report in the Data Bank(s)* (Notification) will contain a Report Password, which ensures that access to the Report Response Service is granted only to the authorized subject. The subject then selects the Report Response Service option on the NPDB-HIPDB web site and follows the instructions provided with the Notification.

When a subject adds, modifies, or removes a statement; initiates or withdraws a dispute; or elevates or withdraws a Secretarial Review request, notification is sent to all queriers who received the report and is included with the report when it is released to future queriers.

Previously, subjects performed these functions via paper correspondence. The on-line Report Response Service provides for fast, efficient processing, while maintaining strict security standards.

When the Data Banks process a report, a *Report Verification Document* is sent to the reporting entity, and a *Notification of a Report in the Data Bank(s)* is sent to the subject. Subjects should review the report for accuracy, including such information as current address and place of employment. If any information is inaccurate, the subject must contact the reporting entity to request

See *Preview of Changes* on page 3



## How to Import Your Entity's Subject Data into the IQRS

If you are a registered entity or an authorized agent, you might maintain practitioner records in an in-house electronic database, such as Microsoft Access. Transferring these records into your IQRS subject database is easy, provided that your records are maintained in a file format that can be converted to American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) comma delimited text.

### Import File Format

Before importing your practitioner records, the files must be converted to ASCII comma delimited format. Most database programs will export data to ASCII comma delimited format. For more information on this format, see the *Fact Sheet on*

### Importing Subject Data into the IQRS.

An example of the required format can be found in the Sample Import File on-line at [www.npdb-hipdb.com/iqrs.html](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com/iqrs.html).

### Import Subject Information

Once practitioner files have been formatted properly, you may import them successfully into the IQRS subject database by following steps 1 through 3.

Step 1: Select **MAINTAIN SUBJECT DATABASE** on the *Options* screen.


The *Maintain Subject Database* screen displays.

Step 2: Select **IMPORT SUBJECTS**.

The *Import Subject Information* screen displays.

Step 3: Check the button beside QPRAC (this indicates that the import files are in ASCII format), then enter the full name and path of your import file under Import File Name or click **Browse...** to locate your file (e.g., C:\Practitioner Database\practitioner list.doc).

The import takes roughly 2 minutes for every 1,000 practitioner records.

**Do not re-import practitioner records into the IQRS; this results in multiple copies.** If errors occur during the import process, manually enter those records into the IQRS by selecting **MAINTAIN SUBJECT DATABASE** on the *Options* screen. 

## Updating Entity Information

Did you know that entities and agents can update much of their registration profile via the IQRS? Just log into the system and select **ADMINISTRATOR OPTIONS** from the *Entity/Agent Registration Confirmation* screen. On the *Administrator Options* screen, click **UPDATE PROFILE** to access the *Update Entity/Agent Profile* screen. (Only administrator accounts have access to this screen.)

Here, entities and agents may change their department name, mailing address, e-mail address, Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), and point of contact information for report inquiries. To modify this information, complete the fields that require a change, enter the certification information, and click **SUBMIT TO DATA BANK(S)**.

### Updating Office/Person to Which Mail Is Directed

To update the office or individual to which mail from the Data Banks is directed, enter the name of that office or individual in the Department Name field within the Entity Information section of the *Update Entity/Agent Profile* screen. You need not send a paper *Entity/Authorized Agent Registration* form to the Data Banks. If you wish to use the paper form, update the "Office or Department to Which Mail Should Be Addressed" under Section A, Entity Identification Information.

Updating the certifying official information in Section F, Certification Statement, of the *Entity/Authorized Agent Registration* form does not update the office or individual to

which Data Bank mail will be addressed. The certifying official information is not maintained by the Data Banks for mailing purposes; it indicates that the person named is authorized to submit registration information to the NPDB-HIPDB, and he or she certifies that the information provided on the form is true, correct, and complete.

The Data Banks recommend that you update mailing information on-line, via the *Update Entity/Agent Profile* screen. Doing so will ensure that the appropriate office or individual receives confidential Data Bank mailings, as well as this newsletter. While only one office or individual will receive mailings from the Data Bank(s), others in your organization may obtain the

See *Updating* on page 6


### Subject Statement and Dispute Screen

A subject may dispute either the factual accuracy of a report or whether a report was submitted in accordance with the applicable reporting requirements, including the eligibility of the entity to report the information to the Data Bank(s). A subject may *not* dispute a report in order to protest a decision made by an insurer to settle a claim or to appeal the underlying reasons for an adverse action, or judgment or conviction. A subject may now add a statement or dispute a report online using the *Subject Statement and Dispute* screen shown above.

Each subject statement is reviewed and approved by the Data Banks before it is disclosed as part of a report to ensure that no identifying information (names, addresses,

The subject may elevate a dispute to or withdraw a request for Secretarial Review using the Report Response Service, provided that the report in question has already been placed in dispute and 30 days have elapsed since initiating discussions with the reporting entity to resolve the dispute or the entity has refused, in writing, to either void or modify the report before the end of 30 days.

Since subject addresses are included as part of reports, which may be modified only by the reporting entity, the Data Banks cannot update this information. The Data Banks, however, will maintain a subject's current mailing address to ensure that Data Bank information is sent to the appropriate address, even if the

In the event of a dispute, the on-line Report Response Service provides a mechanism for timely resolution. Using the Report Response Service will help to ensure that the information submitted to the Data Banks is accurate and appropriate, thereby improving data quality. This benefits querying entities by making sure they receive the most useful, high-quality query results possible. 

Conceived in 1996, the FCP's mission is to develop a uniform health care credentialing process and maintain a secure, web-based credentialing system. Credentialing is the systematic process by which the education, training, licensure, experience, and current competence claimed by health care practitioners is verified and evaluated. This is important to ensure that practitioners are who they claim to be, and are appropriately credentialed and qualified for the work they are asked to perform.

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## NAMSS Conference



“Spirit of  
NAMSS:  
Tradition,  
Commitment,  
Vision,” the

National Association Medical  
Staff Services (NAMSS) 26<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Conference and  
Exhibition, will take place  
October 2 through 5, 2002 in

Philadelphia, PA. The conference  
will feature credentialing courses,  
educational workshops, networking  
opportunities, and, beginning on  
October 3, an exhibition with key  
industry vendors.

The NPDB-HIPDB will be  
represented in the exhibition. The  
Data Banks' booth will feature

literature and other resources that  
will answer operational and policy  
questions. Information on upcoming  
IQRS enhancements will also be  
available. If you plan on attending  
the Conference, stop by and visit! 🍷

## Helpful Hints from the Data Banks

### ✓ IDENTIFYING INFORMATION IN NARRATIVES

When submitting a report,  
please remember that the  
narrative description of acts or  
omissions (and, in the case of  
Medical Malpractice Payment  
reports, the description of the  
judgment or settlement  
statements) in Section C  
cannot include names or  
identifying information regard-  
ing patients, other health care  
practitioners, plaintiffs, wit-  
nesses, or other involved  
parties.

### ✓ RECONCILING QUERY CHARGES

You may view query charges  
via the IQRS using the *Billing  
History* screen. This screen  
allows entities and agents to  
better reconcile query charge  
amounts as they appear on  
their Electronic Funds Transfer  
(EFT) or credit card statements.  
To view billing history, select  
**VIEW BILLING HISTORY** on  
the *Options* screen. Contact  
the Customer Service Center  
and request the Billing Depart-

ment if you believe that your credit  
card or EFT account should be  
credited or debited, or if the Bill  
Status column reads “In Billing” or  
“Billing Dept.”

### ✓ ENTITY POINT OF CONTACT FOR REPORTS

Want to ensure that one designated  
point of contact consistently appears  
on all reports made by your organi-  
zation, even when the reports are  
submitted by various people?  
Complete the Entity Point of Contact  
for Reports section on the *Update  
Entity Profile* screen. The informa-  
tion specified in that section will  
appear on all future reports submit-  
ted or modified by your entity, and  
will be listed on the *Report Verifica-  
tion Document*, the *Notification of a  
Report in the Data Bank(s)*, and  
query and self-query responses.

Point of contact information enables  
questions from subjects or queriers  
to be directed to the appropriate  
person or office, particularly when  
that individual or organization differs  
from the person who submitted the  
report to the Data Bank(s). To  
ensure that inquiries are routed  
properly, indicate the preferred point

of contact on the *Update Entity  
Profile* screen and be sure to keep  
this information current.

### ✓ VOID, CORRECTION, OR REVISION TO ACTION?

If your entity has submitted a report  
on the wrong subject, submit a Void  
to remove the incorrect report, then  
submit a new Initial report for the  
correct subject. If your entity has  
made an error or omission in a  
report, submit a Correction to  
replace the incorrect version of the  
report. If your entity has taken action  
that modifies a previous report (e.g.,  
additional sanctions have been  
taken based on a previously  
reported incident; the length of  
action has been extended or  
reduced; the original suspension or  
probationary period has ended;  
licensure, clinical privileges,  
professional society membership, or  
program participation has been  
reinstated), submit a Revision to  
Action. (Note: Unlike a Void or  
Correction, a Revision to Action is  
treated an addendum to the original  
action, but does not replace it.) 🍷



### FCP from page 3

The FCP promotes collaboration among Federal agencies to: (1) develop and encourage the use of uniform credentialing processes throughout the Federal service; (2) design, implement, and operate a web-based Federal credentialing system, VetPro; (3) maintain a database of primary-source verified credentialing information on Federal health care practitioners; and (4) hold annual forums to promote excellence in credentialing. All Federal organizations employing health care practitioners may participate in the FCP through an interagency agreement.

Credentialers access VetPro on-line and enter basic information to enroll prospective practitioners, who validate and augment their information. VetPro is then used to generate letters containing this information that are sent to primary sources for verification. The sources' verification responses are scanned into VetPro. These responses describe practitioners' education and training, current license(s), work history, DEA Registration/CDS Certificate/State Narcotics Registration, board certification, and references. This information is combined with other data sources to build a complete file of primary-source verified information for each enrolled practitioner. The file is updated for each new appointment or for re-credentialing or re-appointment. Each of these files, by mutual agreement or authority of participating organizations, may be transferred or shared to facilitate relocation or multiple appointments.

The FCP/VetPro system is used in all 172 facilities of the Department of

Veterans Affairs/Veterans Health Administration (VA/VHA) health care delivery network. Other Federal organizations that have joined the program include Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, U.S. Public Health Service, Office of Emergency Preparedness and the National Health Service Corps. Together, these organizations have more than 47,000 Federal providers enrolled in the FCP and are currently using VetPro to vet professionals.

FCP/VetPro earned the E-Government 2002 Trailblazer Award for having implemented one of the most innovative, user-friendly on-line government systems. This is considered a monumental achievement, as the FCP/VetPro system has been in production only since March 2001.

The FCP held its fifth annual federal credentialing forum in Washington, DC, July 24 through 25, 2002. Attendees, including non-federal credentialing organizations, took part in workgroups, asked questions about participation in the program, and facilitated discussions from which outcomes will affect FCP initiatives and the Federal credentialing community at large. Topics of discussion included credentialing during national crises and emergencies, trends in credentialing standards, negligent credentialing, Federal milestones in health data exchange, and users' perspectives regarding the FCP. Exhibits were hosted by FCP, accreditation organizations, biometric firms, and software development companies.

For more information, visit <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/dqa/fcp.htm> or contact Jim Baughman, the FCP Program Director, at 301-443-2725. 📞

## IQRS User Review Panel Meeting



The Integrated Querying and Reporting Service

(IQRS) User Review Panel (URP) will meet on October 17, 2002. The IQRS is the web-based tool designed to provide eligible entities with an automated querying and reporting interface to the Data Banks. The IQRS URP helps ensure that the IQRS remains a valuable, user-friendly system.

The IQRS URP serves as a forum where users of the Data Banks discuss their ideas about past, present, and future Data Bank operations. The IQRS URP consists of panel members from various entities that represent reporters, queriers, and authorized agents. Its mission is to discuss issues related to the IQRS; identify new system requirements; review current querying and reporting issues; and address operational concerns.

The October meeting will cover the following topics: a review of significant accomplishments over the past year, a preview of planned improvements for 2003, and a discussion of future enhancements. Read our follow-up article in the January 2003 issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. 📞

## **Updating** from page 2

newsletter on-line at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com).

### **Updating Organization Name or Statutory Authority**

If you are an entity eligible to participate in one or both Data Banks, be sure to complete the *Entity Registration* form to update your organization name or statutory authority information. Entities entitled to participate in the NPDB are defined in Title IV of Public Law 99-660, the *Health Care Quality Improvement*

*Act of 1986*, as amended, and in the regulations codified at 45 CFR Part 60. Entities eligible to participate in the HIPDB are defined in Section 1128E of the *Social Security Act* and in 45 CFR Part 61.

If you are an agent authorized to query or report on behalf of an entity, be sure to complete the *Authorized Agent Registration* form to update your organization name. (Since authorized agents are not eligible to query or report to the Data Banks on their own behalf, the form is used only to update the organization

name, not to update statutory authority information.) Authorized agents are organizations that have been designated by a registered entity to report to, query, or both, one or both Data Banks on the entity's behalf.

Going on-line to update your registration profile will save time and ensure that Data Bank mailings get to the right person and place. ☘

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## **On the Horizon...**

Beginning in April 2003, each report will indicate whether the *Notification of a Report in the Data Bank(s)* sent to inform the subject of the report (also known as a Subject Notification Document or SND) was returned as undeliverable by the U.S. Postal Service. If the SND was returned to the Data Banks, the new report format will note that the Data Banks attempted to notify the subject, but the attempt was unsuccessful. The upcoming format will also include the subject's address as provided by the reporting entity and the date the report was returned.

Meetings of the NPDB Executive Committee are planned for November 7, 2002, May 13, 2003, and September 23, 2003. Look for highlights from the upcoming November meeting in the January 2003 issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. ☘

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